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CONTINUATION OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE EIGHTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

Draft resolution submitted by Ms. Simone Andrée Rozès (France)

Prevention of urban crime

The Committee on Crime Prevention and Control recommends to the Economic and Social Council that the following draft resolution be transmitted to the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders:

The Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders,

Recalling the Milan Plan of Action, adopted unanimously by the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders,

Recalling the final declaration of the European and North American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention, held in Montreal,

Recalling also the catalogue of crime prevention measures prepared by the Helsinki Institute in compliance with resolution 1989/69 of the Economic and Social Council,

Noting that all States are confronted by the problem of crime, particularly urban crime,

Convinced that, if the desire is to reduce crime, a response based solely on the police and criminal justice system is inadequate, and that it is essential to supplement this response by an active prevention policy,

Considering that it is at local level, and particularly at the urban level, that any prevention policy must be carried out,

Emphasizing that prevention is the concern of all and that in particular:

(a) It is the task of Governments to develop national prevention programmes;

(b) Prevention must bring together those with responsibility for housing, social services, leisure activities, schools, the police and the justice system in order to deal with the conditions that generate crime;

(c) Elected officials at all levels must employ the authority of their office and assume their responsibilities in combating urban crime;

(d) The community must be brought into this effort to ensure greater tolerance, greater social justice and greater respect for the rights of all,

Further emphasizing that political leaders and Governments must promote greater solidarity among members of the community, and that public authorities at all levels must support locally initiated prevention efforts,

Considering that the fear of crime is a problem for all citizens, particularly women and the elderly, while noting, however, that, in many instances, this fear is out of proportion to the true level of insecurity,

Mindful that the causes of crime include:

(a) Poverty, unemployment, the lack of decent housing at reasonable cost and an unsuitable education system;

(b) The increasing number of citizens who have no prospect of social integration, coupled with an aggravation of the inequalities that give rise to a society moving at two speeds;

(c) Loosening of social and family ties, accompanied by parental upbringing that is frequently made more difficult, if not nearly impossible, by living conditions;

(d) The difficult conditions under which people emigrate to the towns or to other countries;

(e) The destruction of original cultural identities;

(f) Developments in the urban environment that promote crime: bedroom communities abandoned during working hours and residential areas lacking in any neighbourhood service;

(g) The difficulties encountered by individuals in finding their place in the community because of the dysfunctions of modern society, and those facing young people as they seek to identify with a culture, a family or a school;

(h) Drug addiction, whose spread is particularly abetted by the other factors referred to above;

(i) The increase in organized criminal activities, particularly drug trafficking and the receiving of stolen goods, which in order to flourish require the involvement of the community,

Considering that these causes are due to factors of responsibility at all levels (international, national, regional, local and individual) and of all types (historical, political, economic, cultural, psychological and moral),

Believing that an effective policy to prevent crime and reduce insecurity can only succeed through coherent and simultaneous action in all of these areas and at all of these levels,

Convinced of the need to develop working practices on a partnership basis, locally and nationally, so as to enable all those responsible to analyse the difficulties encountered and to formulate coherent and useful responses,

Convinced also that police officers, judges, social workers, doctors and teachers and all concerned professionals must be given multidisciplinary training,

1. Recommends that Member States take the necessary steps in the following areas:

(a) Childhood

(i) By developing:

a. A policy in respect of very young children;

b. Pre- and post-natal care and nutritional assistance for mothers and children;

c. Suitable arrangements to provide nursery facilities and education for young children;

d. A policy of support for single parents;

(b) Youth

(i) By developing:

a. The civic qualities of young people through active involvement in local life and appropriate instruction regarding their rights and duties, and through the participation of the young in crime-prevention policies, with particular reference to health, leisure activities, training and employment;

(ii) By providing:

a. Young people with a good-quality education and the possibility of acquiring the necessary qualifications to enter the working world or to become professionally established;

(iii) By encouraging:

a. Enterprises to offer suitable jobs to those who have failed at school or suffer from a handicap;

(iv) By making:

a. A particular effort to restore links between generations;

(c) Family violence

(i) By bringing about the complete integration of strategies to control family violence, sexual aggression and abusive treatment through educational programmes, assistance arrangements and the criminalization of acts of violence;

(d) Housing and urban development

(i) By ensuring that:

a. Housing agencies provide dwellers with a full range of useful services for a satisfactory life and involve them in the administration of their habitat;

(ii) By incorporating:

a. Safety considerations in urban planning and rehabilitation programmes;

(e) Drug addiction prevention

(i) By developing, as a means of combating drug addiction, coherent prevention and education strategies, together with enforcement measures and arrangements for the care of drug addicts;

(ii) By organizing, in schools at all levels, information programmes on drug-related problems;

(iii) By instructing all those involved in social life in the problems of drug addiction, in particular in the need for vigilance;

(f) Police

(i) By ensuring that one of the essential tasks of the police is to prevent crime and that, in order to carry out this task, it must develop prevention initiatives that involve citizens and community organizations;

(ii) By encouraging the police to work more closely with citizens and by stepping up their co-operation with other local officials to reduce the sense of insecurity;

(g) Victims

(i) By seeing to it that the citizens are properly received by the police and justice officials, that they are informed of the follow-up action taken on their complaints, and that they are able to benefit from concrete judicial responses and are entitled to compensation;

(ii) By putting into place machinery to aid victims that is accessible to every victim easily, quickly and free of charge;

(iii) By developing mediation and conciliation mechanisms to prevent conflicts, reduce their effects or prevent their aggravation, while at the same time ensuring that no pressure is placed on the victims;

(h) Prevention of recidivism through criminal justice

(i) By focusing particular attention on young offenders and on their social resettlement, in particular by facilitating their access to all forms of education, social assistance, training, health, employment placement services and public housing;

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(ii) By seeking the effective criminal-law responses through the diversification of sanctions and the avoidance, as far as possible, of imprisonment;

(iii) By making a particular effort, in the event of imprisonment, to avoid the excessively severe marginalization of the offender and the rupture of his or her emotional or cultural ties, and by making available greater health, educational, cultural, sporting and leisure facilities in prisons, through co-operative arrangements with local partners, also ensuring that the resettlement of offenders and their release from confinement must, as far as possible, be facilitated by access to public assistance services;

(i) Communication

(i) By informing the citizens of the prevention programmes available both locally and nationally, and of their results;

2. Draws the attention of the Member States to the following measures, which refer more specifically to the national level:

(a) To encourage the efforts undertaken by the cities through national policies that provide regular and timely financing and that permit ongoing adjustment;

(b) To formulate prevention policies that attack the very causes of crime beyond mere police measures; to combat poverty and unemployment, specifically through wage, minimum income and housing policies;

(c) To incorporate, in national crime prevention policies, programmes aimed specifically at children and the young;

(d) To ensure the co-ordination of prevention efforts among the various public agencies as well as among the enterprises of the public and private sectors;

(e) To give consideration to the growth of a private security sector in the implementation of programmes to combat criminality;

(f) To develop research and to dissiminate its results, establishing data banks on effective crime-control techniques and providing technical assistance to local officials;

3. Invites the Member States to increase their co-operation in the field of crime prevention with the aid of the United Nations Secretariat, the regional and interregional institutions and the non-governmental organizations, specifically:

(a) By strengthening technical and scientific co-operation between States for the purpose of developing:

(i) Their own crime-control policies;

(ii) International co-operation activities;

(iii) Co-operation with developing countries;

(b) By encouraging exchanges between cities implementing prevention programmes;

4. Invites the secretariat to develop its initiating and co-ordination role, specifically:

(a) By encouraging and co-ordinating the work of the regional and interregional institutes with a view to organizing more meetings and exchanges and to stepping up research and training;

(b) By devising tools for the evaluation of public policies designed to combat crime;

(c) By developing the international data bank that will keep all the local officials of our different countries informed of pilot programmes to combat crime;

5. Requests the Secretariat of the United Nations to promote the objectives of the present resolution, specifically by ensuring it the widest possible dissemination, and to report at the Ninth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders on the implementation of this resolution by the States.